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**MULTILATERAL SECURITY COOPERATION AND THE ROK-U.S.
RELATIONSHIP: A KOREAN PERSPECTIVE**

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ABSTRACT

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Structural change has occurred in the security environment of the Northeast Asian region. The countries neighboring with the Korean peninsula now realize the necessity of a comprehensive security agreement. Under this circumstance, the Multilateral Security Cooperation (MSC) is imperative for regional areas to support Korean reunification and to accept a unified Korea as non-threatening. Therefore, the Republic of Korea should share in creating a multilateral security cooperation system in the region, as well as enhance a more solid alliance with the United States. Consequently, the ROK should persevere in its efforts to guide North Korea to join the dialogue and to realize the Basic Agreement. Bilateral security arrangements and growing MSC are mutually reinforcing. The ROK-U.S. relationship should be focused on reunification-oriented security cooperation for peaceful coexistence and promotion of reunification.

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It might be hard to predict the whole picture of a new international order and its direction. In Northeast Asia, however, the regional security order seems to be moving from the old bipolar system toward a multipolar system with the United States at its core. The countries in the region have made efforts to create arrangements for multilateral security cooperation (MSC) to solve regional problems and prevent potential threats, bearing in mind that their regional stability is increasingly linked to world peace and prosperity as their economic and strategic weights increase.¹

It is expected that there could be active multilateral dialogue and cooperation with visible outcomes. The Four Powers (U.S., China, Russia, and Japan) will get deeply involved in the Korean issue to raise their respective influence over the Korean Peninsula. Specifically, a consensus has been built that stability on the Korean peninsula is essential to regional stability and to world peace, and the Four Party Talks, proposed jointly by the ROK and U.S. presidents in April 1966, have received a favorable international assessment and support as a proper measure to solve the Korean issue.² In addition, the United States, in consultation with the ROK and Japan, conducted negotiations with North Korea to end the DPRK nuclear weapons program. These negotiations resulted in a Framework Agreement in 1994 and the establishment of a Korean Peninsula Energy

Development Organization (KEDO). KEDO, consulting of the ROK, Japan, the U.S. and other countries will finance ROK-built nuclear reactors for North Korea.

North Korea, however, has never given up its strategy to communize the whole peninsula in a military manner in spite of the difficulties in maintaining its political system due to lingering economic problems and an increasing number of defects. North Korea has also attempted to drive to scrap the Armistice agreement and to conclude a peace treaty with the United states.

Nevertheless, we can anticipate that dramatic change in the peninsula strategic situation will occur after the KEDO project and the success of the Four Party Talks. In searching for a new mechanism for reducing tension and build confidence, the ROK has emphasized the need for an active diplomacy and also called for establishing multilateral security cooperation in and around the Korean Peninsula.

On the other hand, the bilateral relation between the ROK and the U.S. is likely to remain as one of the most important factors for ROK security. Under this circumstance, it is expected that the ROK-U.S. security relationship should be rearranged for the future.

This research paper will explore the perspectives on MSC in the region and discuss the favorable ROK-U.S. relationship from a Korean perspective. To do this, I will assess the security environment and national interests on the Korean peninsula.

SECURITY ENVIRONMENT AND U.S. INTERESTS ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA

NEW WORLD ORDER

The term "new world order" has become fashionable in the literature of international politics.³ Today's world has witnessed the demise of the ideological confrontation of the Cold War and the spread of an atmosphere of reconciliation and cooperation. In some parts of the world, however, regional conflicts have been on the rise. The world order after the Cold War has been transformed into a multipolar framework with the United States at the center, and a fluid and uncertain world situation is expected to continue for a considerable time.⁴

A series of remarkable events and changes has helped to reshape the nature of international relations. We have witnessed the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of a new Russia, diplomatic normalization between South Korea and the former East bloc countries, and North and South Korea's long-awaited membership in the United Nations.⁵

NORTHEAST ASIA

In the political, economic, and military fields, Northeast Asia is one of the three major strategic areas in the world along

with Europe and the Middle East. The security situation of Northeast Asia has shifted towards extended political reconciliation and economic exchange and cooperation among the regional countries, while the rapid economic growth of the East Asian economies during the last two decades and the growing economic interdependence among those economies have created the impression of relative stability in the region.⁶

However, on the military front confrontation and tension have remained unabated and there has even been a trend towards an arms build-up. In particular, some destabilizing factors remain in the territorial disputes. The unresolved conflicts between Russia and Japan regarding the so-called Northern Territories, conflict regarding the Senkaku Islands between China and Japan, and most evidently hostile confrontation on the Korean Peninsula, all remain to represent the special traits of the region. In short, the major security concerns in Northeast Asia are (1) uncertainty on the Korean peninsular, (2) nuclear proliferation, and (3) military build-up and regional rivalry.⁷

No single country can be dominant, and yet no horizontal equilibrium exists in the region. Russia, China, Japan, and the United States all have certain stakes and therefore maintain multifaceted cooperation, mutual dependencies, and competition among themselves, as well as with North and South Korea.⁸

They have also made efforts to create arrangements for multilateral security cooperation to solve regional problems and

prevent potential threats, bearing in mind that as their economic and strategic weights increase, their regional stability is increasingly linked to world peace and prosperity.⁹

In essence, Northeast Asia should be regarded as the world's foremost security concern. Therefore, peace in the region remains crucial to world-wide peace and security.

U.S. INTERESTS ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA

The term national interest has long been used by statesmen and scholars to describe the foreign policy goals of nation-states.¹⁰ The national interests of the United States may be defined as follows: "The country's perceived needs and aspirations in relation to other sovereign states constituting its external environment." The United States has four basic national interests, and all of its interests and foreign policies can be fitted into these four categories: defense, trade and commerce, building of a stable world order, and promotion of American values abroad. Three levels of intensity of interests are usually expressed in terms of vital, important, peripheral.¹¹

The United States can be expected to play an even bigger role in directing world security and the economic order. However, given the trend of increasing demands among the nations for improved national security to secure their economic development and protect their national interests, the U.S. has burdens to

bear to reconcile other countries' demands for security, with its own national interest.¹²

To identify the U.S. interests on the Korean peninsula and in Northeast Asia, we may use many official document such as "A National Security Strategy for a New Century" and "U.S. Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region".

America must look across the Pacific as well as across the Atlantic. ...we have made significant progress in creating a stable, prosperous Asia Pacific community. In this endeavor, we must reinforce our close ties to Japan, the Republic of Korea.... We must ensure that North Korea continues to implement its agreement to freeze and dismantle its nuclear weapons program.... Together with South Korea, we must advance peace talks with North Korea and bridge that armed divide.¹³

Maintaining a credible security presence in Asia is vital.... The relationship between the United States and the Republic of Korea is...a vital component in our national objective.... Even after the North Korean threat passes, the United States intends to maintain its strong defense alliance with the Republic of Korea, in the interest of regional security.¹⁴

The U.S. interests on the Korean peninsula and in Northeast Asia can be Summarized as (1) economic engagement and enlargement with maintaining regional stability including peace on the Korean peninsula, (2) continuing a leading role and preventing the emergence of a new dominate power over the region, and (3) pursuing non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

It can be said that the U.S. employs both bilateral and multilateral measures to secure these interests.

TWO KOREAS' ARRANGEMENT: CONCILIATION VS. CONFRONTATION

The Korean peninsula is located on the edge of Asian Continent, and neighbor countries are much bigger and more powerful than Korea. Traditionally Russia and China considered the Korean peninsula as a bridge to get to maritime countries, while Japan considered it as a route to advance to the Continent and a dagger threatening the heart of Japan. Therefore, these countries wanted to control the Korean Peninsula.

The security situation on the Korean peninsula in the 1990s is moving toward the end of competition between North and South Korea. Nonetheless, two Koreas are still officially enemies, as no peace treaty was signed when the Korean war ended in 1953. Vast military forces on each side confront one another across the demilitarized zone (DMZ).¹⁵ The submarine intrusion by North Korea in September 1996 was a typical example of the hostile situation that has existed ever since the division of the peninsula. The peninsula has never been stable and never will be, at least not until North Korea changes its current posture.¹⁶

One of key issues to consider for the immediate future is that of North Korea's weapons of mass destruction and their possible use in the event of an imminent collapse of the regime.¹⁷ Related to this, the issue is the overall stability of the region. The Korean peninsula, amid the surrounding four

great powers, comprises the axle of the security environment in volatile Northeast Asia. Specifically, a consensus has been built that stability on the Korean peninsula is essential to regional stability and to world peace, and the Four Party Talks proposed jointly by the ROK and US presidents in April 1996 has received a favorable international assessment and support as a proper measure to solve the Korean issues.¹⁸

North Korea threatens periodically to withdraw from the bilateral nuclear accord it signed with the U.S. in October 1994 which was designed to resolve the North Korean nuclear-arms issue. Furthermore, no agreement has been reached on replacing the armistice agreement which is now virtually dead leaving no effective official mechanism for keeping the peace between the two Koreas.¹⁹

However, as a mid and long-term perspective, the possibility exists for the two Koreas to improve their relations in consequence with the development of a positive security environment in and around the Korean peninsula.

SOUTH KOREA

Since its foundation as a democratic republic in 1948, the Republic of Korea, despite the division and confrontation with North Korea, has attained enormous economic development, hosted the 24th Olympic Games in Seoul in 1988, and has made contributions to the UN and the international community.

An invasion by North Korea constitutes the primary threat to South Korea. Seoul's fears of a sudden, unprovoked attack by North Korea have recently escalated following Pyongyang's official repudiation of the Korean Armistice Agreement and several armed assaults by North Korea's military forces across the DMZ.²⁰

The Korean people expressed their concerns in the national goals and defense objectives set forth in the Republic of Korea Defense White Paper:

National goals of the ROK are "to safeguard the nation under free democracy, to preserve permanent independence by attaining the peaceful unification of the fatherland, to become a welfare society by guaranteeing our citizens' freedom and rights and working toward an equitable improvement in their standards of living, and to enhance the national prestige and contribute to world peace by improving our international status". Defense objectives, which endorse the national goals, are so conceived to "defend the nation from external military threats and aggression, to support a peaceful unification and to contribute to regional stability and world peace."²¹

In short, ROK interests can be summarized as (1) securing a survival base to deter external aggression including all forms of North Korean military violence, (2) maintaining independence with cultural and social integrity, (3) continuing economic growth, and (4) achieving a peaceful reunification.

NORTH KOREA

In North Korea, the existence of severe domestic economic crisis, famine conditions, deep public dissatisfaction, foot riots, and alleged military discontent together pose a potent threat to the survival of the regime, even though no state poses a direct military threat to the DPRK. The main threat to North

Korea's national security comes from the internal crisis caused by the failure of its leaders to initiate the economic reforms necessary to bring some stability to the country.

To cope with its worsening political crisis, the North Korean regime has strengthened internal control over its population. Externally, it has attempted to improve its relationship with the United States to solve the three-fold difficulties of systemic crisis, economic deterioration and diplomatic isolation.²²

North Korea has strengthened its efforts to nullify the Armistice Agreement and advocates the conclusion of a peace treaty with the United States to the exclusion of South Korea. In its policy toward Seoul, North Korea has concentrated its efforts on raising military tensions with the South and creating favorable conditions for the communization of the entire peninsula.²³ Pyongyang can no longer count on either Russia or China to provide it with military support, but China remains North Korea's chief ally.²⁴ The two principal states with which Pyongyang seeks stronger links are the U.S. and Japan. Formalized ties with them would redress the balance of Russia and China befriending the ROK and bring "cross-recognition."²⁵

North Korea's interests—which have not changed—could be summarized as (1) regime survival, (2) economic development, and (3) reunifying Korean peninsula under communism.

EMERGING MULTILATERAL SECURITY MECHANISM

Some in the United States have been reluctant to enter into regional security dialogues in Asia, but I see this as a way to supplement our alliance and forward military presence, not to supplant them. These dialogues can ensure that the end of the Cold War does not provide an opening for regional rivalries, chaos and arms races.

— William J. Clinton, President of the United States

In the post-Cold war era, the concept of "cooperative security" has emerged and has replaced the old concept of collective security from the Cold War period. There is growing interest in nontraditional security threats, such as economic conflict, population movements, trans-national environmental problems, and religions and ethnic nationalism. If these threats can not be met effectively with traditional forms of readiness and deterrence, then more constructive and sophisticated forms of influence and intervention are required.²⁶

THE CONCEPT OF COOPERATIVE SECURITY

Robert Keohane defines multilateralism as "the practice of co-ordinating national policies in groups of three or more states, through ad hoc arrangements or by means of institutions." Multilateralism needs to operate in an atmosphere of "diffuse reciprocity" where the members expect their cooperation to yield "rough equivalence of benefits in the aggregate and over time."²⁷

Development of multilateral cooperative security structures can be an effective means of maintaining subregional and regional peace and stability. Cooperative security attempts to deepen understanding of the mutuality of security as well as to broaden the definition of security beyond the traditional military concerns to include environmental, economic, and social concerns. Security, therefore, "is more than the absence of war: it is the presence of a stable and prosperous peace."²⁸

REQUEST FOR MULTILATERAL SECURITY COOPERATION(MSC)

Under the current threat-based approach to national security policy, unnecessary conflicts with neighboring nations are likely to occur. This situation could develop into open conflict in the absence of an institutionalized regional forum to manage them.

Consequently, there is an urgent need to create a cooperative security arrangement involving Japan, China, and the United States, and possibly at a later stage, Russia. This arrangement would formally renounce war and encourage confidence building measures, and take the form of an entente cordiale with security guarantees.²⁹

After the end of the Second World War, the United States acted as a regional hegemony. Recently, however, it has drastically reduced its force presence in the region. Without firmly established multilateral cooperative security mechanisms,

the Asian states will be restricted to bilateral negotiation on regional disputes.³⁰ Consequently, the United States believes that the unique long term security challenges in Northeast Asia argue strongly for the creation of a separate sub-regional security dialogue. Such a dialogue would be developed in close consultation with its allies, Japan and the Republic of Korea.³¹

Furthermore, multilateral security cooperation (MSC) is imperative for regional areas to support Korean reunification and accept a unified Korea as non-threatening. There is a growing consensus on the necessity for regional MSC, but no clear indication of how it will proceed. The nations of the Asia-Pacific region have pursued cooperative arrangements since the beginning of the post-World War II period. We may consider ARF (ASEAN Regional Forum)³², CSCAP (Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific)³³, and NEACD (Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue)³⁴ as multilateral organizations for security cooperation in the region.³⁵ In Northeast Asia, however, no subregional organization to handle the security issues effectively with strong confidence among the governments has been founded yet.

Northeast Asia today is much richer and more interdependent than in the past. Riches and interdependence will provide confidence for pursuing multilateral endeavors.

MAJOR POWERS' PERSPECTIVES ON MULTILATERAL SECURITY

COOPERATION IN THE REGION

As mentioned above, the security environment and the nature of threat have changed in the post Cold War era, with increasing potential for new conflicts. This requires for more concrete efforts for a peaceful settlement of conflicts. Therefore, it is expected that there will be active multilateral dialogue and cooperation with visible outcomes in the Northeast Asian region. The neighboring countries are likely to maintain their growing concern about the prospect of a unified Korea. The Four Powers will get deeply involved in the Korean issue to raise their respective influence over a unified Korea.

However, in Northeast Asia, nations remain dependent largely on their bilateral alliances to maintain regional security and stability because there is no effective multilateral security cooperation mechanism through which to consult, adjust, and resolve regional security issues.³⁶

U.S. PERSPECTIVE

The U.S., as being the only superpower³⁷, seems to hold major responsibilities for peace and stability in this new international order.³⁸ The U.S. has advanced its national interests under its leadership in world affairs and has pursued a

national security strategy of "engagement and enlargement."³⁹ Therefore its security strategy toward Northeast Asia has several aims. Through alliance with Japan, it hopes to preserve a stable environment essential for regional peace and prosperity; through alliance with the ROK, to deter a renewed war on the Korean peninsula and maintain stability in the region; and through comprehensive engagement with China, to induce the country to be a responsible member of the world community and to enable regional countries to pursue common interests and reduce tensions.⁴⁰ Thus the role of the United States is most often discussed in terms of military balance and equilibrium in the region.⁴¹

While recognizing the importance of the institutional linkage that the "San Francisco system"⁴² of bilateral defense and security alliance has developed in the region, supporters of the cooperative security approach seek to extend cooperation in the Asia Pacific beyond the narrow focus of the few select, like-minded states. Indeed, one of the problems of the San Francisco system, designed around a common threat, was the absence of a mechanism for the various Asian allies of the United States to build confidence among themselves.⁴³

It is easy to find the U.S. concerns of MSC in the region from many official document as follows:

Asian Security Policy has been constructive participation in and support for regional security dialogues.... Our other multilateral consultations include ad hoc coordination on the North Korean nuclear issue; policy planning

talks with Japan, the Republic of Korea and other allies; and participation in mixed government/academic United States-Japan-Russia trilateral meetings.⁴⁴

We have supported new regional dialogues... on the full range of common security challenges.⁴⁵

The nations of the Asia-Pacific region have pursued cooperative arrangement.... The dynamic growth of the Asian economies and new security concerns... have intensified initiatives for multilateral cooperation.⁴⁶

The U.S. seems to believe that the unique long-term security challenges in Northeast Asia argue strongly for the creation of a separate sub-regional security dialogue for Northeast Asia. To lay the groundwork for establishing such a forum, the U.S. has participated in a series of mixed government/academic conferences on Northeast Asian security issues. The pattern of consultations among key countries, which led to the Agreed Framework between the United States and North Korea, may help create conditions for establishing a Northeast Asia security cooperation.⁴⁷

OTHER POWERS' PERSPECTIVES

JAPAN: Security is becoming Japan's primary concern. Although an island chain, the country is effectively bordered by a nuclear power of uncertain political direction (China) and a threshold nuclear power of uncertain future (North Korea).⁴⁸ Japan will actively discuss constitutional revision and arms build-up. On the other hand, Japan will be positively involved in Multilateral Security Dialog in cooperation with the U.S.

In particular, Japan has special concerns with tensions on the Korean peninsula, Chinese military modernization as it

relates to China-Taiwan relations and disputes over the Spratlys, and turmoil that may result from the Korean unification process. Acknowledging that peace and stability on the Korean peninsula is essential to stability in Northeast Asia and to its own security, Japan has further consolidated its cooperative ties with the ROK and has assisted in international efforts to secure peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula.⁴⁹

CHINA: China's involvement is crucial to the success of efforts to build a regional order in the Asia-Pacific region. But until recently the Chinese leadership has not shown any enthusiasm for regional cooperation on military or political issues.⁵⁰ China acknowledges that stability on the Korean peninsula is an essential element for its national strategic goal, i.e., economic development, and places emphasis on a peaceful resolution of the Korean problem through dialogue and negotiation between the North and the South. Because China's policy toward the Korean peninsula is affected by the necessities of its national strategy, so long as China continues its policy of reforms and openness, it will have a positive impact on the stability and unification of the Korean peninsula. On the Korean peninsula, China does not want rapid change or stalemate. China accepts a U.S.-ROK alliance in a divided Korea, but a united Korea with a continued Korean-American military alliance would be very undesirable to Beijing.⁵¹

China will attempt to control the level of influence other countries exert over the North as the North improves relations with the U.S. and Japan. China would also try to absorb unified Korea into its strategic orbit while China is emerging as a power with the capability to seek hegemony in the region.

RUSSIA: Russia is a power that will soon or later return to the Northeast Asia scene with greater political and strategic importance and influence. Russia has shown strong displeasure with the fact that it is excluded from the Four Party Talks which includes the U.S., China, South Korea, and North Korea.

Russia will attempt to modernize its Far Eastern forces once its domestic politics and economy become stabilized. Russia will also actively participate in Northeast Asia MSC.

Russia's Korea policy is to support peaceful coexistence between North and South, denuclearization of the peninsula, and a gradual and peaceful unification. In the spirit of the Basic Relations Treaty it concluded with the ROK in 1992, Russia has increased cooperation in the political, economic and military fields. In 1995 it announced the abrogation of the Treaty of Mutual Assistance and Friendly Cooperation with North Korea, but has nevertheless maintained the relationship between the two countries.⁵²

KOREAN VIEWS ON SECURITY COOPERATION

- BILATERAL VS. MULTILATERAL -

US-ROK-DPRK RELATION

Following North Korea's announcement of its intention to withdraw from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in March 1993, the United States initially attempted to get other nations to agree to multilateral economic sanctions against North Korea.⁵³ After this attempt failed, due primarily but not exclusively to Chinese unwillingness to impose sanctions, the United States was forced to negotiate with the North. The result of these negotiations was the Framework Agreement, signed by the United States and North Korea in October 1994, in which North Korea agreed to freeze its nuclear program, allow international monitors to inspect critical nuclear waste sites, and dismantle the main facilities of its nuclear program. In return, the United States, Japan, and ROK agreed to provide North Korea with alternative sources of fuel, including oil and light water nuclear reactors. The latter is to be built by the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) and financed primarily by ROK and Japan.⁵⁴

North Korea believes the political, economic, and military cooperation between South Korea and the U.S. significantly impedes its goals. Therefore, its interim goal to get the

ultimate goal has become the withdrawal of the U.S. troops from South Korea. To make the U.S. withdraw its troops from South Korea, it proposed a peace treaty to the U.S., excluding South Korea. To respond to that proposal, in April 1996 South Korea and the U.S. proposed Four Party Talks include the U.S., China, South Korea and North Korea. After repeated pre-meetings, the main conference of four-party peace talks was held in December 1997 and March 1998. However, as anticipated, it has so far produced only disappointing results without any positive conclusion.

In fact, the two Koreas made an agreement on reconciliation, non aggression, exchange and cooperation in 1992. If this agreement were implemented, any new peace agreement would be redundant.

BILATERAL ARRANGEMENT

While the ROK has strong links with each of its neighbor states, the apparent desire of China, Russia, and Japan to keep the Korean peninsula divided and to have good relations with North Korea means that their interests differ from Seoul's concerning the future of the Koreas.⁵⁵ Each of these states poses an indirect threat to Seoul. This stems from years of mutual distrust and unclear motives behind Japan's new active defense postures, China's military build-up, and Russia's

unpredictable foreign policy, particularly its ambiguous Korean peninsula policy.⁵⁶

The ROK-US alliance is the mainstay of Korea's defense system, the underpinning that permits the ROK to seek relationships with the neighboring countries that will contribute to regional stability.⁵⁷ Since North Korea remains both a threat to the South and an obstacle to multilateral cooperation, the U.S. military presence in South Korea is still an essential part of the overall security structure of Northeast Asia.⁵⁸

The United States' network of diverse bilateral relationships in the 1990's includes mutual security alliances, a variety of access arrangements, and informal periodic military-to-military exercises and exchanges. These bilateral relationships⁵⁹ address numerous security concerns that are often unique to individual nations in the region. Taken as a whole, however, they have formed a strong regional network promoting peace and security. These bilateral commitments remain inviolable, and the end of the Cold War has not diminished their importance. Moreover, U.S. interest in developing layers of multilateral ties in the region will not undermine the significance of core bilateral ties.⁶⁰

The U.S. is willing to improve bilateral political and economic ties with the North, commensurate with its continued cooperation to resolve the nuclear issue, engagement in North-South dialogue, and the cessation of North Korea's chemical and

biological programs and ballistic missile proliferation activities. Whatever progress can be made with respect to multilateral activities, bilateral relations will remain critically important.⁶¹

MULTILATERAL ARRANGEMENT

Despite the current obstacles, efforts at multilateralism in various forms will continue in Northeast Asia and will eventually make greater progress.⁶² In the short term, the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-Korea security relationships may be the most effective stabilizing security arrangements in existence.⁶³ However these security guarantees, while still vital, were developed to contain the Soviet threat, and are not an adequate response to the need for a new system, though they can be the foundation of one.⁶⁴

Therefore, in the long term, more multilateral forms of cooperation must evolve. Because the current alliances exclude China and Russia, they are perceived as potential threats by influential elites in those countries. Furthermore, China and Russia are still significant powers in the region, and so an important step in reducing any future threat they might pose is to encourage greater transparency and cooperation with other powers.⁶⁵

The Korean government has emphasized the need for an active diplomacy and has also called for establishing multilateral

security dialogue in and around the Korean peninsula.⁶⁶ In May 1996 the ROK and Japan took the lead in proposing the establishment of a Northeast Asian security organization, to include the ROK, Japan, China, Russia and U.S.⁶⁷ While China and North Korea continue to resist the implementation of a multilateral system, showing the current futility of Russian proposals to immediately convene such a forum, the only long-term solution for a guaranteed peace in Northeast Asia is the inclusion of all countries of the region into a cooperative security framework.

ROK President Kim Dae-Jung announced, in line with this reality, his consideration to establish a multilateral security cooperation system which includes seven countries: U.S., Japan, China, Russia, Mongolia, and the two Koreas.⁶⁸

Despite the need for the establishment of a multilateral security arrangement, a number of significant factors inhibit its development.⁶⁹ In the Asia-Pacific region, unlike in Europe, there was no successful experience of a multilateral forum for dealing with security problems. Although multilateral security dialogue in the region would complement American alliances and military arrangements in East Asia and the Western Pacific, there has been no practical way to prove this argument.⁷⁰

China, for example, continues to be reluctant to support attempts at multilateral cooperation since it prefers to maintain a secretive policy-making process.⁷¹ Similarly, the North Korean communist regime resists attempts to open its society to outside scrutiny and prefers bilateral negotiations to multilateral cooperation. Russia, on the other hand, would prefer multilateral cooperation in which it played a role. But, the existence of its territorial dispute with Japan continues to inhibit the normalization of Russian-Japanese relations, which in the opinion of many analysts remains an impediment to full-scale multilateral cooperation in Northeast Asia.⁷²

The real question is whether a multilateral scheme will be proceeded without the participation of North Korea, if the DPRK does not join the dialogue. North Korea as well as China may not be so enthusiastic to the idea of establishing a multilateral security forum if it might lead to curtailing their military influence.⁷³

THE FUTURE FOR ROK-U.S. RELATIONSHIP

One of the most important factors for Korean security is the relationship between the Republic of Korea and the United States. During the last half century, ROK-U.S. security cooperation has played a key role in deterring North Korean aggression against the South, in maintaining peace on the Korean Peninsula, and in

assuring stability in the region. In order to achieve national defense objectives with their own will and strength, the ROK armed forces have been pursuing a self-reliant defense posture. Its embodiment, however, inherently has numerous constraints. Given the security environment, including geopolitical circumstances, the ROK needs to maintain a defense system based on cooperation with other countries. In this light, the ROK-US alliance is the pivotal axis of our defense system.⁷⁴

According to a recent poll, nine-in-ten Koreans see the U.S. forces in Korea as important to Korea's security with 47% saying "very important". A majority (64%) think that Korea should maintain its security alliance with the U.S. even after reunification. And a majority of the public (72%) view the U.S.-Japan alliance as important for preserving peace and stability in East Asia.⁷⁵ As an other indication, President Kim Dae-Jung has said that the U.S. forces deployed in Korea and Japan should remain even after Korea's reunification.⁷⁶

Because of changes in the security environment since the end of the Cold War, the ROK and U.S. need to develop a future-oriented security cooperation.⁷⁷ The ROK-U.S. security cooperation can contribute to Korea in three major ways:

- (1) contribute to deterrence and reduction of tensions.
- (2) support the military dimension of the South-North dialogue.
- (3) foster peaceful coexistence and promotion of reunification.

CONCLUSION

In the Korean peninsula, though the progress of the two Korea's relationship does not currently seem to be leading toward a peaceful destination, it might be expected that a dramatic change in the strategic situation in the peninsula will occur after the KEDO project has been completed if the Four Party Talks are successful. For reunification to take place, a more desirable alternative is a rapprochement between the two Korean governments characterized by much reduced military tensions, frequent and comprehensive official dialogue, and greatly increased economic and social interaction — often referred to as a "soft landing."⁷⁸

One of the most favorable conditions for the ROK interests could be reunification under the ROK Government, while maintaining stability along with economic development. As for U.S. interests, favorable conditions could be the stability with non-proliferation of WMD and no new dominant power as well as enlarging economic engagement in the region.

In order to achieve the interests of both sides effectively, we may consider multilateral security cooperation as a useful instrument. Under the current threat-based approach to national security policy, major powers in this region might positively think over the requirement of multi-faceted and multi-dimensional

cooperation to avoid unnecessary conflicts with neighboring nations.⁷⁹ There is a growing consensus on the usefulness of regional MSC, but no clear indication of how it will proceed. Northeast Asia has not experienced the same magnitude of changes as elsewhere in the world political scene and there are many obstacles to the building of a multilateral security structure in the region.⁸⁰

Cooperative security approaches are not intended to replace the traditional U.S. bilateral security arrangements in the Asia Pacific region, since these alliances will remain integral to the defense of national sovereignty. Rather, the current bilateral agreements should remain in place while a new system of multilateral security is developed.⁸¹

In the post Cold-War era, the ROK's role as a front-line post against communism is being replaced by its role as a regional security partner with the potential to assist in preserving peace and stability in Northeast Asia. With expectation of the peaceful reunification on Korean Peninsula and a favorable ROK-U.S. relationship in the future, I would like to recommend some factors as my conclusion.

(1) I recommend that the ROK pursue creation of a MSC in the Northeast Asian region and the implementation of existing agreements between the two Koreas in order to foster the peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula. This would mean that the ROK would promote its economic and security relations with each

of the countries in the region, exercise a leading role in the creation of a MSC including North Korea, and be capable of defending itself with a more solid alliance with the United States. Consequently, the ROK would persevere in its efforts to guide the DPRK to join the dialogue and to realize the Basic Agreement which was signed by both Koreas in February 1992.

(2) The United States should confirm the strong ROK-U.S. alliance at every available opportunity. This confirmation of the U.S. commitment would prevent a North Korean miscalculation by giving continuous warning signals to the North. Bilateral security arrangements and growing MSC are mutually reinforcing. The Four Party Talks, other MSC, and successful implementation of the Geneva Accord between North Korea and the U.S. are needed in order to induce peaceful change in North Korea.

(3) The ROK-U.S. relationship has served both nations and will continue to confer benefits in the future. To cope with these developments in the ROK-U.S. relationship, the focus of security cooperation should change from a military alliance for deterring North Korean provocation to a unification-oriented security cooperation for peaceful coexistence and promotion of reunification, and, in the long run, towards the preservation of stability and peace in the entire Northeast Asian region.

Word Count: 5,918

ENDNOTES

¹ The Ministry of National Defense of the Republic of Korea, Defense White Paper 1996-1997, 37.

² Ibid., 37-38.

³ Benning N. Garrett, "The New World Order, American Power and Northeast Asia," The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis (Winter 1992): 10.

⁴ ROK, Defense White Paper, 3.

⁵ Hong Suk Park, "Trilateral Concert in Northeast Asia toward the Korean Peninsula," Korea and World Affairs vol.xxi, No.2 (Summer 1997): 21.

⁶ Woo Sang Kim, "Power Transition and Strategic Stability in East Asia," Asian-Perspective Vol.21, no.1 (Spring-Summer 1997): 157.

⁷ Sung Han Kim, "Exploring Confidence-Building Measures in Northeast Asia - A Korean Perspective," Korea and World Affairs Vol.xxi, no.3 (Fall 1997): 426-427.

⁸ Park, 21.

⁹ ROK, Defense White Paper, 37.

¹⁰ Donald E. Neuchterlein, "National Interest as a Basis of Foreign Policy Formulation," USAWC Course 2 Readings Vol.1, (Carlisle Barracks: USAWC, 1997): 147.

¹¹ Ibid., 154.

¹² ROK, Defense White Paper, 32.

¹³ The White House, A National Security Strategy for a New Century, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. White House, 1997), i-ii.

¹⁴ Office of International Security Affairs, Department of Defense of the United States, United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region, (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense), 5-10.

¹⁵ Jane's Sentinel Group, Jane's Sentinel: China and Northeast Asia, (United Kingdom: Jane's Sentinel Group 1997), 25.

¹⁶ Park, 21-22.

¹⁷ Jane's Sentinel, 2.

¹⁸ ROK, Defense White Paper, 37.

¹⁹ Jane's Sentinel, 25.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ ROK, Defense White Paper, 15-16.

²² Ibid., 52.

²³ Ibid., 53.

²⁴ Jane's Sentinel, 7.

²⁵ Ibid., 17.

²⁶ Sung Han Kim, 425.

²⁷ Craig A. Snyder, "Building Multilateral Security Cooperation in the South China Sea," Asian Perspective Vol.21, no.1(Spring-Summer 1997): 8-9.

²⁸ Ibid., 12-13.

²⁹ Yashiro Nakasone, "the Security Environment of the Asia-Pacific Age," Asia Pacific Review Vol.4, no.1(Spring-Summer 1997): 15.

³⁰ Snyder, 11.

³¹ United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region, 13.

³² In 1993, the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Meeting (PMC) decided to turn the security component of the PMC into ARF, which is a forum for bringing together official representatives of member countries to discuss regional security issues. ARF's first meeting was in July 1994, in Bangkok. ARF brings members together to share their regional concerns and interest. With ASEAN as host, the ARF can address a wide range of political and security issues and also elaborate on particular ASEAN security concerns, such as expanding ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation into a regional code of conduct. ARF discussions have been initiated over issued such as confidence building measures (e.g., arms registry, notification of military exercises), anti-personnel landmines, chemical weapon proliferation, and the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone. ARF brings together 21 participants, including the nine ASEAN states (Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, the Philippines, Vietnam, Burma, and Laos), ASEAN's ten dialogue partners (the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, the European Union, India, China and Russia), as well as Papua New Guinea, and Cambodia.

³³ CSCAP is a non-governmental organization (NGO) established in 1993 to provide a structured process for regional confidence-building and security cooperation by promoting multilateral dialogue, consultation, and cooperation among academicians, security specialists, and government (including military) officials. CSCAP links member committees in fourteen Asia-Pacific nations: Australia, Canada, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mongolia, New Zealand, North Korea, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, and the United States. There are also two associate members, the EU and India. CSCAP pre-dates the ARF and now seeks to provide research support at the unofficial (second track) level to help advance ARF aims. CSCAP international working groups undertake policy-oriented studies with a view toward formulating policy recommendations for individual governments and official multilateral dialogues, especially the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference (PMC) and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).

³⁴ NEACD is a process for discussing security concerns among the United States and Northeast Asia countries, including Japan, South Korea, North Korea, China, and Russia. Sponsored in the United States by the University of California at San Diego, conferences were held in October 1993 (San Diego), May 1994 (Tokyo), April 1995 (Podmoskovie, Russia), January 1996 (Beijing), and September 1996 (Seoul) focusing on confidence building measures and security cooperation. North Korean officials participated in an initial planning session, but have not attended any of the meetings.

³⁵ United States Pacific Command, Asia-Pacific Economic Update, (United States Pacific Command: Summer 1996), A-9.

³⁶ ROK, Defense White Paper, 73.

³⁷ As Charles Krauthammer puts it, "American preeminence is based on the fact that it is the only country with the military, diplomatic, political and economic assets to be a decisive player in any conflict in whatever part of the world it chooses to involve itself." Charles Krauthammer, "the Union Movement," Foreign Affairs, vol.70, No.1 (American and World 1990/91): 24.

³⁸ Park, 25.

³⁹ ROK, Defense White Paper, 32.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 39.

⁴¹ Park, 22.

⁴² The "San Francisco system" refers to the series of bilateral defense/security treaties that the United States signed in San Francisco in the 1950s with Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of China, and the Republic of the Philippines.

⁴³ Snyder, 14.

⁴⁴ A National Security Strategy for a New Century, 12-13.

⁴⁵ United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region, 24.

⁴⁶ Asia-Pacific Economic Update, A-1.

⁴⁷ A National Security Strategy for a New Century, 13.

⁴⁸ Jane's Sentinel, 2.

⁴⁹ ROK, Defense White Paper, 41-42.

⁵⁰ Susan L. Shirk, "Chinese View on Asia-Pacific Regional Security Cooperation," Analysis, Vol.5, no.5(December 1994): 6.

⁵¹ Fei-Ring Wang, TACIT Acceptance and Watchful Eyes: Beijing's Views about the U.S.-ROK Alliance, USAWC, Strategic Studies Institute, (January 1997), 17-18.

⁵² ROK, Defense White Paper, 47.

⁵³ Herbert T. Ellison, and Bruce A. Acker, The New Russia and Asia: 1991-1995, (Seattle, WA: the National Bureau of Asian Research, Vol.7, no.1: 1996), 53.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Jane's Sentinel Group, 34.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 25

⁵⁷ ROK, Defense White Paper, 23.

⁵⁸ Ellison, 55.

⁵⁹ The United States has six security commitments in the Asia-Pacific region, including security treaties with Japan (September 8, 1951), the Republic of Korea (October 1, 1953), Australia (September 1, 1951), the Republic of the Philippines (August 30, 1951), and Thailand (September 8, 1954); and the Compact of Free Association with the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau (signed November 4, 1986).

⁶⁰ United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region, 5.

⁶¹ Harry Gelman and Robert A. Scalpino, Northeast Asia in an Age of Upheaval (Seattle, WA: the National Breau of Asian Research, Vol.6, no.2: 1995), 31.

⁶² Gelman, 29.

⁶³ Ellison, 62

⁶⁴ Ibid., 61.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 62

⁶⁶ Young Sun Song, Northeast Asia multilateral Security cooperation System (Seoul: Korea Research Institute for Strategy, 1994), 63.

⁶⁷ Jane's Sentinel, 35.

⁶⁸ "Kim Dae-Jung; an Interview with Asahi News Paper" linked from the Chosun Ilbo <<http://www.chosun.com/w21data/htm/news/>>, 23January 1998.

⁶⁹ Ellison, 62.

⁷⁰ Song, 63.

⁷¹ Ellison, 62.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Song, 63

⁷⁴ ROK, Defense White Paper, 31.

⁷⁵ Office of Research and Media Reaction, Briefing Paper (Washington D.C.: U.S. Information Agency, October 22, 1997), 1.

⁷⁶ "Kim Dae-Jung; an Interview with Asahi News Paper" linked from the Chosun Ilbo

⁷⁷ ROK, Defense White Paper, 23.

⁷⁸ Thomas L. Wilborn, "Dimension of ROK-U.S. Security Cooperation and Building Peace on the Korean Peninsula," Asian Perspective Vol.21, no.1, (Spring-Summer 1997): 125-26

⁷⁹ ROK, Defense White Paper, 3.

⁸⁰ Park, 21.

⁸¹ Ellison, 55.

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